



Links Players

Secrets and Shanks

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts.... (Psalm 139:23)

I remember one Christmas many years ago, listening to my uncle talk about golf. He loved the game — probably more than anything else — but he was a fair-weather golfer. Every winter, he put away the clubs and stayed off the course until spring.

But one particular winter, he became obsessed with improving his swing.

He spent months in his basement (long before simulators) “firing his hips” through imaginary golf swings. At Christmas dinner, he couldn’t stop talking about it. According to him, this move would finally unlock lower scores, more trophies, and the best golf of his life.

Then Spring Arrived.

He went out for his first round of the year and shanked almost every shot. Not just a few bad swings — nearly every shot. The disappointment was unbearable; he never played golf again. But I did notice a new tennis court in his backyard the next Christmas!

I’ve thought about that story a lot over the years because golf has a way of exposing reality. You can rehearse something in private long enough to convince yourself it’s working, but eventually the golf ball tells the truth.

Life does that too.

What we practice privately — our habits, motives, attitudes, resentments, addictions, pride, or dishonesty — eventually surfaces somewhere publicly. In our relationships. Our reactions. Our integrity. Our peace.

Bob Rotella once wrote that golf is “a game of recovery.” Life is too!

Very few golfers have perfect swings, and nobody has a perfectly pure heart. Eventually, pressure reveals what’s really there.

That’s why transparency matters so much. I’ve often heard the saying, “We’re only as sick as our secrets.” There’s a lot of truth in that.

God already sees what we try to hide anyway.

Not to shame us — but to heal us.

And maybe real spiritual growth begins the same way good golf does: with honest feedback, humility, and the willingness to change.

Prayer: Lord, help hidden things surface gently and shape my heart with lasting truth.

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Keith Wood

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